

APPROVED

BEAVERTON TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES JUNE 7, 2012

CALL TO ORDER and ROLL CALL

Chairman Conway called the Traffic Commission meeting to order in the Forrest C. Soth City Council Chamber, 4755 SW Griffith Drive, Beaverton, Oregon, on Thursday, June 7, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. and called the roll.

Traffic Commissioners present included Ernie Conway, Paul Cohen, John Herring, Amy Johnson, and Bradford McClean. Commissioners Ashley Hosford and Lauren Holmes were absent and excused. Alternate Commission member Bill Berg was in the audience.

City of Beaverton staff included City Transportation Engineer Jabra Khasho, Police Traffic Sergeant Steven Schaer, and Commission Recorder Debra Callender.

VISITORS

No one came forward to speak.

STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Khasho said the Commission has before them additional testimony that arrived after the staff reports printed.

CONSENT

Chairman Conway reviewed the consent agenda comprised of the draft March 1, 2012, meeting minutes. There were no changes to the minutes.

Commissioner McClean MOVED, SECONDED by Commissioner Johnson to approve the March 1, 2012, meeting minutes as written.

Question called on the motion. Commissioners Cohen, Conway, Herring, Johnson, and McClean voted YES. The MOTION CARRIED unanimously. (5:0)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Issue TC 695: Traffic Control Change on SW Anne Street at Clifford Street

Chairman Conway opened the public hearing concerning TC 695.

Staff Report:

Mr. Khasho said that the City received a request from Mr. Todd Brem to remove the "Right Turn Permitted Without Stopping" Sign that is posted at the intersection approach from Anne Street. Mr. Brem indicated that the sign makes the intersection unsafe.

Mr. Khasho explained that currently, if travelling westbound on Clifford, there is a stop sign and if travelling southbound on Anne, there is also a stop sign, in addition to a sign below it reading "Right Turn Permitted Without Stopping." There is no control for traffic traveling eastbound on Clifford.

Mr. Khasho explained that if two vehicles, whether cyclist or car, approach the intersection at the same time, there is sometimes confusion as to which driver has the right of way. Drivers going westbound think southbound traffic will stop, when they are actually permitted to make a right turn without stopping. The issue can become more confusing when the westbound traffic starts to enter the intersection and southbound traffic approaches the intersection. Logically, the driver on Anne must stop; but the sign says otherwise and some people will not stop before making the right turn, even when there is a car already in the intersection.

Mr. Khasho said that typically, low volume intersections in the City are left without any control, which generally works well and safely. In this location, the reason for the two stop signs is the sight distance for westbound and southbound traffic, which is likely slightly substandard. For that reason, the traffic control in those directions is necessary. He said that traffic volume is very low at that intersection, with traffic coming from the north being only 423 vehicles per day, 314 entering from the west and 113 entering from the east.

Mr. Khasho went on to explain that the majority of the eastbound traffic to Anne turn left to go north and the majority of southbound traffic makes a right. He explained that traffic control devices are established based on guidelines from The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and that the allowance for a right turn without stopping is the result of a certain combination of an engineering study and the geometry of the street which makes it possible for traffic turning right to safely enter the intersection without stopping. He explained that since there is some confusion at the intersection, staff recommendation is to remove the right turn without stopping sign and leave the two stop signs in place, although there have been no crashes at this intersection.

Chair Conway asked why a three-way stop was not used.

Mr. Khasho explained that the MUTCD guidelines establish that a three-way stop cannot be used unless the traffic volume is high and is almost equivalent at all legs, which it clearly is not at this intersection.

Chair Conway asked if the staff recommendation was to remove the right turn permitted sign without the removal of any other stop signs at the intersection.

Mr. Khasho explained that it was the recommendation of staff to remove the right turn permitted sign and nothing else to remove conflict and confusion at that intersection.

Public Testimony:

The Commission received written testimony on this issue from Traffic Sergeant Steven Schaer, Todd Brem, and Jerry Noble (in the record).

Todd Brem, Beaverton, Oregon, said he was riding his bike west on Clifford, where he stopped at the stop sign on Clifford and had started to proceed through the intersection when a car approached southbound on Anne. He said that he knew the driver faced a stop sign, so he proceeded through the intersection after having made a full stop. As he was in the middle of the intersection, the driver on Anne didn't stop and proceeded to turn right, causing a near miss. He said it was only at that point that he realized the other driver didn't have to stop, but that there was no way he could have known that prior to entering the intersection. Mr. Brem said that he later contacted a public official, who told him that the approaching car had to yield to him if he was already in the intersection, but that the Oregon Driver's Manual was in conflict with the public official's statement, because it says that the sign means that the right-turning driver has the right of way and that all other traffic must yield to that driver. He asked how approaching traffic could know to yield without knowing the sign is in place and that he sees no benefit to having the sign permitting right turns without stopping because it doesn't help clear up congestion when the traffic volume is so low.

Chair Conway referred to Mr. Brem's letter and asked if he had followed up on getting conflicting messages from the public official and the driver's manual.

Mr. Brem responded that he had not.

Leslie Beachwood, Beaverton, Oregon, said she lives on this corner, watches traffic daily, and fully supports Mr. Brem's proposal. She said that she would like to see the stop sign on Clifford removed altogether and that she feels there is no sense in having a stop sign there. She explained that with such low traffic coming through that intersection, she feels it would make more sense to have traffic roll through. She mentioned that there is no control further down on Clifford, which is actually the back entrance to Vose Elementary School and that it can be very dangerous because so many people travel Clifford to get to the Interstate. She noted that BelAire has speed bumps and asked if Clifford could also have speed bumps installed.

Commissioner Herring asked how long she has lived on this corner.

Ms. Beachwood said she had lived there for 23 years.

Commissioner Herring asked if she knew how long the stop signs had been there.

Ms. Beachwood replied that she thought they had been installed in the 90s.

Commissioner Herring asked if they were both installed at that time.

Ms. Beachwood replied that she believed they had been installed at the same time.

Chairman Conway explained that the stop sign on Anne was installed due to insufficient sight distance and that the Commission would follow up to determine why the stop sign was placed on Clifford and provide an explanation to her. He also encouraged Ms. Beachwood to submit a formal request to City staff for speed bumps on Clifford and explained that it was dependent on funding and would require 50% support of neighboring property owners.

Jerry Noble, Beaverton, Oregon, said he lives 50 feet from this corner on Anne Street and he has never been confused. He said that he understands that if you are driving south on Anne and turning right, you don't have to come to a complete stop; whereas if you are making a left turn, you do need to come to a complete stop. Mr. Noble referenced the staff report, which indicates that there might be some confusion when a car coming from the east enters the intersection when another car approaches from Anne on the north. He said that because the car approaching on Anne would be on the right side of the street, if the two cars approached at the same time, that car would have the right of way regardless of whether there was a sign permitting right turns or not. He mentioned that the staff report concludes that changing the control at that intersection would be safer, but also that there haven't been any reported crashes at that intersection and wonders how the intersection can be made safer if there have been no crashes there. He added that he feels the intersection is already very safe due to three factors: the first is that cars generally slow down there as they approach because it's a T intersection; second, there is a stop sign which makes you slow down; and lastly because there is a dip in the road due to a drainage channel that makes it too bumpy if you are going too fast. He said he is chair of the Vose Neighborhood Association Committee (NAC) and he clarified that his comments are his own and do not necessarily represent the thoughts of Vose NAC members, though he said he had sought input from his fellow board members and found that they all agree and oppose removing the right turn permitted without stopping sign from Anne.

Commissioner Herring asked him what he would expect to happen if a car going west on Clifford stops at the intersection and then proceeds through it when a car approaches from Anne on the right.

Mr. Noble stated that he would expect most drivers to stop unless they wanted to cause a crash. He again stated that it's not a high speed intersection and he's never observed any confusion there before.

Chairman Conway stated that crash count is not always the best gauge of safety because there are near misses that are not recorded and went on to say that making an intersection safer doesn't have to mean that there have been crashes there previously, rather that you have to take into account near misses and a potential for crashes in the future and, hopefully, eliminate any confusing factors which could lead to or cause a crash.

Connie Weise, Beaverton, Oregon, said she has lived near this intersection for 41 years and believes the signage is confusing. She said that within the past month or so she has observed two near misses. She said that she understands the rule as it's written in the driver's manual but still feels that the intersection is confusing. She pointed out that it's confusing to her and she has lived there for years and knows what to expect and that it must be even more difficult for folks who aren't familiar with the area and might not understand that the right turn permitted sign is there and that those drivers will have the

right of way even if you have come to a full stop on Clifford and proceeded after stopping. She has seen many near misses and was delighted to see this issue come to the City's attention.

Paul Christa, Beaverton, Oregon, said the intersection is confusing and there is a concrete water drain that usually necessitates a stop or at least slowing your speed significantly. He said that even though he knows he can turn without stopping, he ends up slowing down because of the dip in the road anyway and sees no reason drivers shouldn't have to come to a full stop. He also stated that he would agree that the stop sign on Clifford could be removed altogether, leaving only the stop sign on Anne.

Staff Comments:

Mr. Khasho said someone asked why Clifford Street does not have traffic calming devices and wanted to clarify that it was evaluated twice in recent years and never met the threshold to qualify, meaning that the speeds observed during the study were at or below the speed limit. He stated that Clifford has a school zone just behind Vose Elementary so it is controlled when children are present.

Chairman Conway asked Mr. Khasho to address the issue of removing the stop sign on Clifford, making it a traditional throughway with just the stop on Anne.

Mr. Khasho responded that as he explained in his report, the stop signs were placed due to limited sight distance at the intersection between eastbound and southbound traffic. He said that the stop sign had been there many years and he was unable to find specific detail on its placement but that his interpretation was that it was due to the limited sight distance. He said that it could also be that traffic traveling southbound on Anne must be very near the intersection before approaching cars on Clifford become visible. He said the same is true for eastbound traffic on Clifford.

Commissioner Herring suggested that even if the right turn permitted sign is removed, people would still tend to roll into the intersection.

Mr. Khasho said that it is possible, as it is at every intersection.

Chairman Conway asked Sgt. Schaer to clarify his interpretation of what should happen if a car approaches on Anne after another has already stopped and proceeded through the intersection traveling west on Clifford.

Sgt. Schaer explained that if the car on Clifford had stopped and proceeded through the intersection while clear, the car coming down Anne to make a right turn would need to yield to the car that is already in the intersection. He added that he agrees the right turn permitted sign should be removed to remove potential confusion because then both cars are expected to come to a full stop in both locations.

Chairman Conway closed the public hearing concerning TC 695.

Commission Deliberation:

Commissioner Cohen asked about placing a sign beneath the stop sign on Clifford which states that southbound traffic does not stop.

Mr. Khasho responded that the MUTCD guidelines allow for such signage in places where there might be confusion and went on to explain that typically, at a four way stop, there is a sign which reads "ALL WAY" and if you approach a stop sign without that, not everyone at the intersection stops and it is the responsibility of the driver to know that.

Commissioner Johnson said she concurs with staff's recommendation because she would also be confused at an intersection where a driver with a stop sign wasn't expected to stop. She added that it's a small intersection with low enough traffic volume that she can appreciate that it might not be necessary, but that she agrees there is a potential for confusion and danger and therefore agrees with the recommendation to remove it.

Chair Conway thanked everyone for coming down to speak on the issue. He said that he is in favor of removing the sign to eliminate the confusion, but that he's a bit disappointed that there's not an easier way to add a sign that reads 'oncoming traffic does not stop' on the stop sign on Clifford. He agrees ultimately that the confusion would likely be removed if the right turn permitted sign were removed altogether.

Commissioner Herring said he visited this site a few days ago and had a similar experience similar to what Mr. Brem described and agrees there needs to be a change at the intersection. He also added that he doesn't understand why there is a stop sign on Clifford and feels that there should only be a stop sign at Anne, or a stop sign for both approaching directions on Clifford.

Commissioner Conway questioned staff whether or not there would be a safety issue with removing the Clifford stop sign.

Mr. Khasho again explained that the stop sign is there because of limited sight distance on both sides.

Commissioner Herring asked if modifying the recommendation and final written order to remove the stop sign on Clifford was an option.

Mr. Khasho said staff will review the issue if the commission feels it must be done, but at the time of the meeting, the issue before them was the right turn permitted sign on Anne. He said it can be reviewed and discussed at the next meeting.

Commissioner McClean agrees with staff recommendation to remove the right turn permitted sign on Anne, but does not agree with removing the Clifford stop sign. He said he had also visited the intersection and sees that sight distance can be a problem and that it is possible that westbound traffic on Clifford may not stop when a car approaches from Anne, and that the right-turning car on Anne may not see the car in time to stop, causing a potential safety hazard.

Mr. Khasho said it is very uncommon to remove a stop sign once people become accustomed to stopping. There must be strong data to support removing a traffic control device once it is in place and a study would have to be done to determine the potential outcome of removing such a device.

Commissioner McClean stated that there is obviously enough confusion to warrant a change.

Commissioner McClean MOVED, SECONDED by Commissioner Johnson to approve staff recommendation as written for TC 695 to remove permission to allow right turns without stopping on SW Anne Street at Clifford Street and to approve the Final Written order.

Question called on the motion. Commissioners Cohen, Conway, Herring, Johnson, and McClean voted YES. The MOTION CARRIED unanimously. (5:0)

Issue TC 696: Crosswalk on SW Menlor Lane at Barrows Park

Chairman Conway opened the public hearing concerning TC 696.

Staff Report:

Mr. Khasho said Ms. Linda Campbell requested a marked crosswalk on Menlor Lane at the Barrows Park pathway. Ms. Campbell indicated that there is an increasing number of pedestrians crossing there and feels it would increase driver awareness to that fact if there were pedestrians there.

Mr. Khasho explained that the park connects just east of 154th on Barrows and that the park is in alignment with the old Barrows. Barrows used to be where the park is and when Progress Ridge was constructed, Barrows was realigned and the old alignment was converted to the park, connecting at two ends with Barrows. To the west, the park connects just east of Horizon, where there is a marked crosswalk. On Menlor, there is a sign but not a marked crosswalk on the pavement.

Mr. Khasho further explained that Menlor Drive is a two-lane neighborhood street with very low traffic volume, at 1785 vehicles per day and that the majority of the traffic is on the south side of Barrows. Folks that live in that are very familiar with the streets and surrounding area.

Mr. Khasho said that he had reviewed research from past years regarding marked crosswalks. Past research concluded that marked crosswalks give pedestrians a false sense of security. For this reason, the City's policy is to leave crosswalks unmarked unless there are other devices in place like islands or curb extensions where you'll find a mid-block crosswalk.

Mr. Khasho explained that there have been studies done concluding that three- or four-lane streets with higher volumes should not have a marked midblock crosswalk. However, at lower volume streets, crosswalks neither increase nor decrease safety, but there is some potential to improve safety by raising awareness that people are crossing

there. Based on that potential to enhance safety, staff recommendation is to approve the marked crosswalk in this area.

Public Testimony:

The Commission received written testimony on this issue from Traffic Sergeant Steven Schaer and Linda M. Campbell (in the record).

No one came forward to testify.

Staff Comments:

No additional comments.

Chairman Conway closed the public hearing concerning TC 696.

Commission Deliberation:

Commissioner McClean agreed that there is a chance to increase driver awareness of pedestrians crossing in that area. He realizes that the studies on marked crosswalks may not always agree with that outcome, but that in his personal experience, when he sees a marked crosswalk he is more aware that there might be pedestrians or cyclists in the area; therefore, he feels the request should be approved.

Commissioner Herring said he visited this site and almost drove past it without realizing a crosswalk there. He concurs that there is a potential benefit to painting a crosswalk on the street in that area.

Chairman Conway thanked staff and Sgt. Schaer for all the time and work they put into making the recommendation. He said he likes uniformity of having a marked crosswalk both at Horizon and at Menlor, but is concerned about the false sense of security for pedestrians. Even so, he agrees that since the area is a relatively low volume street, this situation does merit a marked crosswalk.

Commissioner Johnson supports the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Cohen said it is a busy intersection and when he visited the site, he saw several cars cross without stopping for pedestrians. He also visited Horizon, where the crosswalk is marked, and observed that cars do stop for pedestrians there. He said that he was there in the evening and there was still quite a bit of pedestrian traffic, and since it is obviously a busy pedestrian area, he supports the recommendation to paint the crosswalk in hopes of increasing driver awareness.

Commissioner McClean MOVED, SECONDED by Commissioner Cohen to approve the staff recommendation to approve the request to install a marked crosswalk on Menlor Lane at Barrows Park path, and to approve the Final Written Order.

Question called on the motion. Commissioners Cohen, Conway, Herring, Johnson, and McClean voted YES. The MOTION CARRIED unanimously. (5:0)

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Khasho said that in October 2011 Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District (THPRD) presented information on the Fanno Creek Crossing over Hall Boulevard. They did not have the funding for either option presented at that time, and have since been exploring an at-grade crossing there, which included more traffic analysis at the intersection of Greenway and Hall. The determination of the revised study was that an at-grade crossing would work. THPRD presented the results of the revised study to the stakeholder committee and as a result, the at-grade option might be reconsidered.

Mr. Khasho explained that the interim solution would be a beacon without widening Hall Boulevard to have two left turning lanes until THPRD applies for a grant and receives funding for an at-grade crossing.

Mr. Khasho said that if that option becomes viable, it might again be presented to the Commission for review because it would be a traffic control change.

Chair Conway asked if the beacon was an option they were considering.

Mr. Khasho said that currently it is an at-grade crossing next to the driveway.

Chair Conway asked if changing the holding situation at that intersection was not mentioned because the double left turn was not included in the proposal.

Mr. Khasho said that it was included because the third option included double left turn lanes. He said that the situation can be left as-is until funding is available and added that the City Council was supportive of seeking other options.

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Conway said he serves on the Washington County 2035 Transportation System Plans Community Activity Commission, which addresses changes that were initiated by the City of Portland and Multnomah County's Regional Transportation Plan Update. He said that anyone interested in participating in the review of the 2035 Transportation Plan. Meetings are scheduled for June 13 in Hillsboro, June 14 at Cedar Park Middle School and June 25 at Tigard High School. He encouraged anyone interested in long term transportation planning to attend and added that it will be a very informal discussion which will also cover the 2020 and 2025 plans.

Mr. Khasho said the July meeting will most likely be canceled.

ADJOURNMENT

The June 7, 2012, meeting of the Traffic Commission adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Debra Callender, Commission Recorder